

CHILDREN + YOUTH

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PHOTO Jerry Norfor



Central Singapore Mayor Ms Denise Phua, SMU President Professor Arnoud De Meyer and participants of this year's Free Kicks Challenge gather for a group photo.

## CENTRAL SINGAPORE CDC & SMU KICK OFF A THREE-YEAR PARTNERSHIP

A new partnership between Central Singapore CDC and SMU will assist and bond the community, while adding vibrancy to students' lives

The Central Singapore CDC and Singapore Management University (SMU) have kicked off a three-year partnership to facilitate a host of student-driven collaborations to benefit the community. The partnership comes as SMU celebrates its 15<sup>th</sup> birthday this year.

Mayor of Central Singapore Ms Denise Phua hopes that the collaborations can kick-start initiatives to give underprivileged residents opportunities to try something new like rock-climbing. "Only by getting out of their comfort zone will people realise what they like and don't like, and more importantly, what they're good at. Such activities will boost their self-esteem," she said.

Ms Phua also praised SMU for its efforts to give back to the community. "A good education should maximise the potential of students — not only for their own benefit but also for others, especially those at risk of being left behind."

Similarly, SMU's President Professor Arnoud De Meyer believes that such collaborations will be fruitful for their students. "Such initiatives help them understand their future life goals and become leaders of themselves, others and the community."



Prof Arnoud De Meyer, Mayor Ms Denise Phua and Mr Zainudin Nordin.

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Mayor Ms Denise Phua

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### Kickin' Off To A Good Start

The Free Kicks Challenge 2015 was held on 28 February at Kovan Sports Centre and was co-organised by the Central Singapore CDC and SMU Soccer Club. The event attracted 500 youths from the various Free Kicks Centres and their family members. Grassroots Adviser for Bishan-Toa Payoh GRC Mr Zainudin Nordin, who is an advocate for engaging disadvantaged youths through sports, also turned up to lend his support.

One of the stars of the day was 17 year-old Sundramoorthy, a defender from the team representing Henderson Free Kicks Centre. "I'd like to be a professional footballer someday and this is a useful start. My weekly training sessions give me something to look forward to," he said, after a successful 4-0 win.

Free Kicks gives aspiring footballers like Sundramoorthy an avenue for polishing their skills.

### Building Bonds Over Football

Instrumental to the success of the players of the Lengkok Bahru team is the guidance of the SMU Soccer Club, which has been coaching disadvantaged youths since September 2014. "The kids were rowdy at first, but after gaining their trust, they started listening to us and we were able to work together quite well," said third-year SMU business student Marcus Tan. "It's a fantastic feeling watching them play, because they really shine on the pitch."

### ABOUT THE FREE KICKS PROGRAMME

The Free Kicks programme conducts weekly football clinics for 259 youths aged 8 to 18 from low-income families, and 60 special needs students. The clinics, which are run by professionals from S-League clubs and students from SMU Soccer Club, culminate in an annual Free Kicks Challenge, where teams go head-to-head in a mini-tournament.



If you are interested to volunteer, email Yanli at [PA\\_Centralsingapore@pa.gov.sg](mailto:PA_Centralsingapore@pa.gov.sg)



Besides helping to organise the event, SMU students and staff joined in the day's fun.